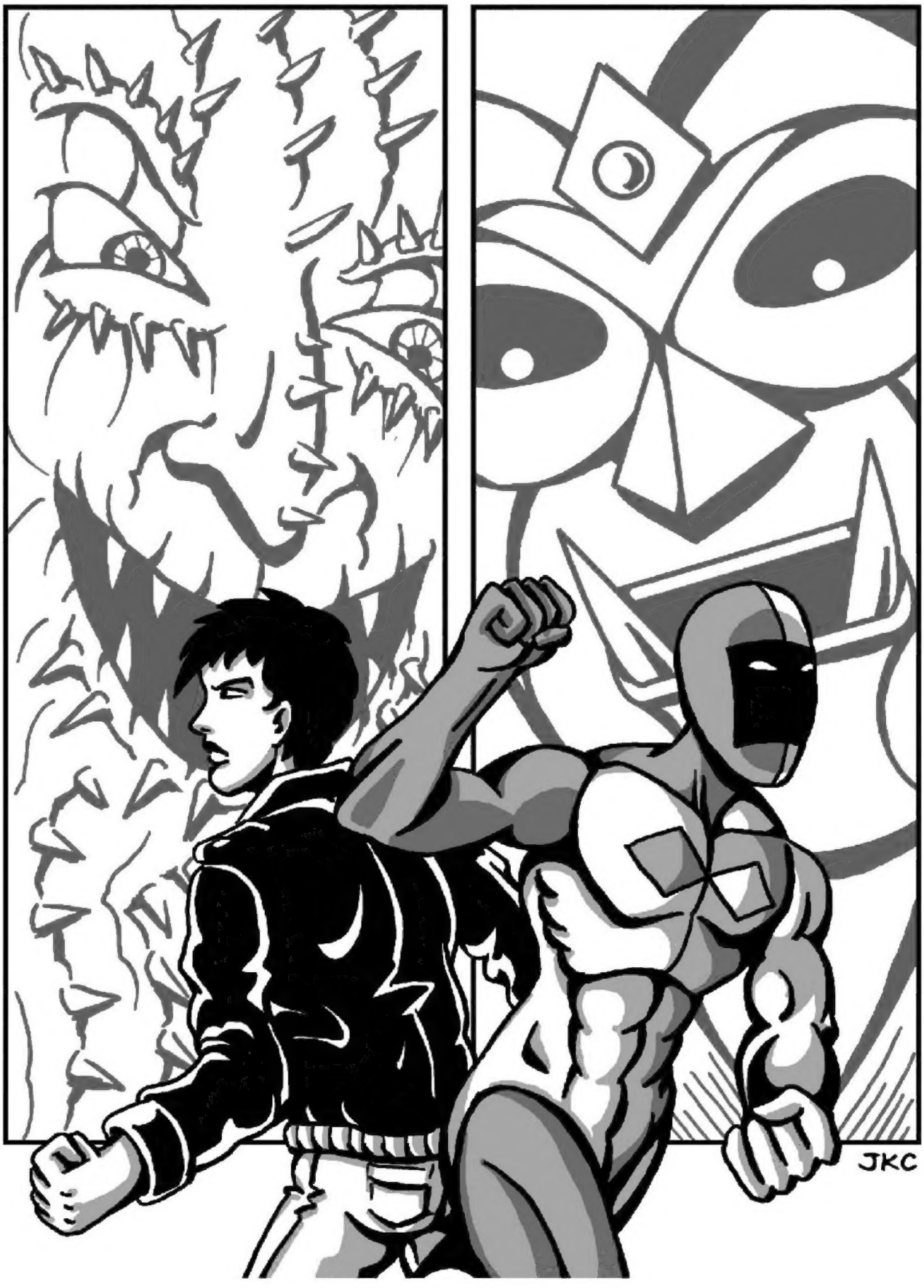
UFO
UNITED FANZINE ORGANIZATION

TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS 228



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TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS #228
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CHAIRMAN CHATTER

Thanks to **J. Kevin Carrier** for drawing the front cover of this issue, which features his *Fantasy Theater* characters Phantos and Capella. Thanks also to **Tom Ahearn** who drew the back cover, featuring Marvel's Speedball. A color version of this illo (colored by Mort Todd) will be the back cover of issue #91 of my fanzine *Ditkomania*.

To anyone reading this who isn't a member of the UFO (United Fanzine Organization) and would like to join, all of the information you need can be found within the pages of this issue. The guidelines under which this co-op operate are in the UFO Constitution which is located at the end of this issue.

There are currently **seven** active members of the UFO, plus two honorary members (Main & Keeter). There were two UFO memberzines released since last issue: *Hero Central Universe* #8-9 (a double issue) by Jason Bullock and *Valiant Efforts* #4 by Don Ensign.

BRANSTETTER: paid until March 2014
BULLOCK: paid until May 2014
CARRIER: paid until June 2013
ENSIGN: paid until January 2014
GAFFORD: dues expired (send $20)
IMES: paid until February 2014
JOHNSON: paid until March 2014

The **"must publish a zine by"** dates:

BRANSTETTER: March 2014
BULLOCK: May 2014
CARRIER: April 2013 *(overdue)*
ENSIGN: May 2014
GAFFORD: January 2013 *(overdue)*
IMES: March 2014
JOHNSON: March 2014

If it turns out that any member needs an extension, simply ask. I have granted J. Kevin Carrier and Sam Gafford publishing extensions. Sam tells me he will be putting out a zine devoted to weird fiction, hopefully next month.

"Must write" a column for TF #229: Sam Gafford.

I have standardized the deadlines for *T-Frags*, making the deadline on the 20th of every other month. The deadline for next issue (#229) is **July 20th**.

The **election for Chairman** occurs in September. According to the UFO Constitution, those members who want to run for Chairman should announce their intentions to run by the July issue (which is the next issue of TF). I do plan to run again for another term, but if anyone else wants to run, please say so in your column next issue.

If you'd like to stay in touch via the internet, note that there are two UFO pages on Facebook: the public group page (search for *United Fanzine Organization*), and the secret page limited only to current members (*UFO Members Only*). Also, check out the official UFO website (run by me) at http://unitedfanzineorganization.weebly.com

-- Rob Imes,
UFO CHAIRMAN

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STRANGE FREQUENCIES

Opinions and Editorial
by David Branstetter

Hero Central 8-9

Hero Central Universe is an epic multicharacter multistory comic that seeks to blend several different genres into one compelling package. Being a new reader I couldn't help but to be lost and I must admit that I had a hard time understanding the story. I think that the lack of context for new scenes and the lack of establishing shots helped to contribute to this problem. It's apparent that Jason Bullock is excited about his creation and wants others to share his vision. Somewhere along the way the awesome story he's envisioned isn't quite translating to paper. Don't get me wrong, there are plenty of bright spots in the book. For instance as the book moves along Jason begins to adopt more of a grid pattern to his pages. This makes the story flow better and it makes it easier to understand what happens next. There was a particular page that caught my attention. It's when Maris embraces Tony after he was acquitted for murder. That scene was really touching and it felt very natural. The combination of the close up in panel 4 and the open shot of the embrace worked really well. There's a panel a few pages later where Maris says "I hate Dogs".Her perfect piercing eyes communicates just the right amount of intensity for the scene.

I'm also kind of intrigued with this whole Reinfeld/ Dracula subplot. I don't really understand how that story can fit into the modern setting. I'm also not sure if this is following the books story or if it's moving forward into uncharted territory.

One thing that really took me out of the story for HCU: Confidential was the shot for shot remake of X-Force #4. Instead of focusing on the story I kept thinking... I've seen this before. The first clue was the Spider-man like character called Shutterbug. I was really impressed by his design. Just retro enough to remind me of Spider-Man but different enough to be it's own thing. Even with those similarities I'd really like to see more of Shutterbug. I think he has a great look and an interesting concept. Just imagine how a character whose main gimmick is taking pictures and how that would effect people in our social media drenched world. Keep up

the good work and as always I'm looking forward to the next issue.

Valiant Effort #4

It seems this time in Valiant Efforts #4 Street Fury story takes the lead. In an interesting introduction, a new Shadow Stalker takes over the family job of being a superhero. It appears that the suit give's it wearer certain abilities that makes Shadow Stalker one tough guy. When the characters aren't collecting bounty on drug dealers they're worried about the spiritual life of their new team mates.

I definitely connected with the Golden Protector in issue 3 and was disappointed that after gracing such amazing cover that he wasn't the star attraction to the issue. I will say that his appearance in this issue was more satisfying than the Street Fury story. I liked how the story was more focused and pretty plot heavy on one character. I think this made the action a little easier to follow. However it wouldn't be a Valiant Efforts comic without the obligatory spiritual conflict. The worship scene on the second to last page was a little out of place. I think it would be more interesting if he's having a conversation with himself while the battle is going on. I think that would add a little more conflict to the story. If we feel that the character is struggling (either with spiritual depression or with a physical nemesis) we'll be able to relate to him more.

The whole point of these books are to find something (like superhero comics) in common with folks who don't necessarily have a spiritual life. I say these books could use a little more spiritual conflict and less physical conflict. I'd really like to see the characters struggle with their dual roles, that being a superhero and a believer in God. Those responsibilities should weight heavily on their minds. There seems to be a gleeful rush for these characters to kick some tail. I can't relate to that because it borders too much on wish fulfillment and fantasy. Yes comics are about escapism but they must also draw us in with situations that we all experience. Superman is not interesting because of the things he can do, it's the things that can not do that makes him an interesting character.

Well I don't want to overstay my welcome. It's good to see another issue of Valiant Efforts out. Comics by their very nature are not an easy thing to do and to have another one come out mere months from the previous issue it's a good sign of things to come.

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The Ensign Report #8 (May 2013) UFO edition

Printed as a part of *Tetragrammaton-Fragments* #228. Comments and opinions by Don Ensign. © 2013 Don Ensign

5th Page: Occasionally I'll add a fifth page to my normal four page columns. On this page I'll discuss issues that were raised in previous issues outside the context of normal reviews.

The Blue Boy Chronicles: One project I've been working on over the past several years is a publication devoted to the Golden Age Captain Marvel, Jr. The first issue is almost ready to head to the printers. It you are interested in getting a copy let me know.

Ditkomania #90 (Rob Imes, March 2013). This issue is almost exclusively dedicated to a long reminiscence of Ron Frantz. Frantz is probably best remembered as being the publisher of the short-lived Ace Comics in the late 1980s (not to be confused with the Ace Comics of the 1940s and 1950s).
The primary strength of "Walking in the Footsteps of Giants" is Frantz's engaging, folksy, somewhat crusty style of writing. He calls them as he sees them. He is strongest went he is telling about his personal contact, relationships and business dealings with comics makers like Steve Ditko, Vince Sullivan and Jerry Siegel. This lengthy piece has historical value as it sheds light on the later careers of these noteworthy comic book personalities. The other strength is the thinking ("what happened?") behind Frantz's publishing venture of Ace Comics. I remember when this line came out in the 1980s and thought it was a fine idea but only garnered enough reader support to last a short time in the marketplace. I appreciate finding out why the company failed. Thanks Rob for publishing this piece of comics history.

Strawman #10 (David Branstetter, 2012). As others have mentioned this is a very nice package with many small press contributors. When I think of "straw man" I think of a "strawman argument" in logic where someone misrepresents or trivializes an opponent's argument making it say something that it isn't. Without seeing any previous Strawman tales I can't say whether this logical fallacy is indicative of David's character. The main three-part mis-adventure of Strawman is a downer with our protagonist revisiting past failures. David has done a good job in portraying the anxiety, aimlessness, failure and blandness of Strawman's existence. He covets a coat, he can't remember a wife or girl friend who claims she spent five years with him and apparently his former girl friend (someone he does remember) is marrying his best friend. Interspered amongst this depressive story are some

real gems. Strawman's far too short two page jaunt with Possum certainly provides a few chuckles. Blair Kitchen is a terrific big foot cartoonist.
I enjoyed Max Ink's Blink. Hank starts out by doing an ecologically correct good work. But Sam, the Jewish girl, will have none of it. She, as a pessimistic realist, launches into lengthy harangue on the utter failure of human nature to change but is cleverly and mercifully offset by Blink's (the airhead Blonde) innocent desire to just go swimming. A wonderful and gentle counterpoint which deflated a tedious and self-important lecture.
Undoubtedly the best story in the book was the Sin Hombres story where the character is in a hotel room reading probably a Gideon's Bible about the story of Christ's Resurrection from the gospel of John. A real pearl of direction and hope amongst the relative aimlessness and hopelessness of the rest of the issue. David welcome to UFO and I'll look forward to more of your work in the future.

HeroCentral Universe 8-9 (Jason Bullock, 2013?). As I read more of Jason's work on HeroCentral things are starting to become more clear. Fifty years ago in 1963 the X-Men first appeared. This super hero group was different from the rest in that they weren't just teenage mutants but they were a closed club or society. They were an exclusive club/family and actually didn't have much contact with normal people outside Professor X's school (later on several had normal girl friends). This group and the somewhat earlier Legion of Super Heroes contained large groups of super powered peers in which each character could to relate to similarly powered super people. This was different than say the Avengers or the JLA where the heroes in each group had separate adventures and lives where they related to a cast of normal people. The X-Men prototype (super hero group being a full time job and surrogate family- not just an infrequently attended exclusive club as with the Avengers or the JLA) has proven very popular since at least the 1970s. In some ways it mirrors the peer group of many of the readers. About the same time Marvel tapped into mythology with Thor presenting Norse legends and sometime later added in Heracles (and other Olypmian gods) representing the Greeks myths. Of course, Wonder Woman (and Captain Marvel) had earlier used mythology as a basis for their origins and story material. However Thor was just much "cooler" that the rather juvenile Wonder Woman stories of the time. HeroUniverse is similar to the X-Men in that the characters seem to be super heroes almost all the time. They don't seem to have much down civilian time. We don't see a whole lot of interaction with normal humans--they spend most of their time fighting the bad guys. They also seem similar to the Thor comics (and the early Dr. Strange) in that they pulled characters from various mythological pantheons. HeroCentral is even more complex absorbing entities from Norse, Egyptian, Greek, Japanese, Arab, British myths and legends (as well as one from Biblical history). Probably the main job for Jason is to develop a coherent, understandable and relatable storyline out of these many disparate strands. The main problem is that I'm not always sure who the good guys are. Obviously Aesys, the puppy killer, is not one of the good guys. Hopefully as time goes on I can become sure who I should be rooting for. Once again nice layouts and breakdowns of the story. The extra pages helps advance the narrative very well. *The HCU: Confidential* #3 has been helpful in getting a handle on so many characters that are popping up in the series.

Self Publisher Magazine #60 (December 2012) This issue of *Self Publisher* has two different qualities from the previous issue. The first is the overall design has changed as graphic designer Jay Savage has taken over as Creative Director. Savage incorporates white space, more leading, a new san serif typeface and large gutter spanning photos (and illos) to give the layouts a much more polished look from the previous issue. While there are still some design wrinkles to iron out Savage's design gives the magazine and elegance and visual sophistication that it previously lacked.

The second new emphasis is the spotlight on the British self publishing comics scene. There are three major interviews with British cartoonists Jim Stuart (creator of *Ganjaman*, a superhero made from a cannabis leaf), Mychailo Kazybrid (*Aardman Comics*), and Russ Walton (a former wrestler and publisher of Home-Made heroes). Two of these interviews were conducted by Brit Darren Worrow (interviewed in SP #59s see *T-Frags* #227).

This issue is also filled with articles on preparing your taxes, POD Printing, Picture Smash/Smashwords ebooks. Shire's article on POD is perhaps the most informative and is a followup on last issue's piece on distribution. These sorts of articles are important as they get into the nuts and bolts of self publishing.

There is another review section with brief analysis of several small press comics. There are several comic strip samples such as Landlark by M. Neno is a very good imitation of Jack Kirby's work post 1972. To be fair with Neno he does add some rather non-Kirby pages (like p. 17 which shows multiple face shots and closeup of a record turntable). There is also "Stone" by Rick Silva and Alice Veidt). The art has a CC Beck feel to it showing a woman engaging another other woman in a bar brawl. Also is a sampling of various offerings from the 86'd horror anthology by Bill Hook and Nick Perry of 86'd Studios. Some of this is somewhat incoherent and offensive.

Perhaps the best overall feature is the lead interview with Clayton Murwin of Heroes Fallen Studio publishes "stories from veterans and those currently serving in the armed forces about present and past conflicts" in graphic novel form. This is a noble effort well deserving of a lot of support.

Criticism: New design: There is a problem with running imagines behind the type making the copy hard to read (pp. 18, 6, 5, 33). Second there is a review of *Assailant Comics Binary Gray* #1 (p, 28), and part of the same review is repeated on p. 30. Third, there is confusing switching from three column format to two column and back to three columns (pp 41-43). There are not cover shots or art samples from the various comics reviewed (pp. 28-31).

There are editorial issues that need to be addressed. There needs to be some introductory material presented to get the

British fan Frank Humphris made this fine illo. I'm very honored.

reader up to speed about why one should spend time reading a specific article or interview. For example the Jim Stuart interview starts off with a quote from Jim Stuart rambling on about how he first begin his *Ganjaman* comics. That is all well and good but Darren Worrow should have given some context (dates, places, the importance of Stuart, etc). Again why should I spend time reading about this gentleman? The same with the Smashwords article. What is Smashwords and why should it be important to my small press publishing efforts? Don't assume your readers are automatically up to speed on this stuff. There have been several issues published since this issue and these design and editorial bugs seem to be working themselves out.

Perhaps the major question here is the one which looms heavily over all small/independent/self publishing. Is there an audience out there for the work that is produced by such a multitude of creators? It seems that it ultimately gets down to self expression--the desire to place your work in the public forum for anyone who might be interested in reading it. The problem here is that it seems as if the readership of magazines like *SPM* is made up mostly of creators. While that's fine it would become a lot more important if it had a board base of readers (not exclusively creators) who are looking for alternative content providers with material unlike that already produced by mainstream comic companies. While I am not exclusively a creator--so much of the work presented in *Self Publisher Magazine* is so far from what I'm interested it--it seems as if it was produced on a different planet. Of course this cultural balkanization is not an exclusive problem with comic book entertainment.

Bio-Speak 8

Sometimes comics sneak in the backdoor through more respectable media. During the late 1950s there seemed to be a slight disreputable aspect to comics. Even though I lived through the crime and horror phase of the early 1950s comics era being a toddler and very young child I was oblivious to what was happening in the greater world of comic book publishing. Sometime between 1955 and 1960 my parents who wanted to cultivate my skills in reading got me a subscription to *Children's Digest* (probably through school discount plan). I remember that it was fun getting a real magazine in the mail once a month. I always thought of *Children's Digest* as a kid's version of the adult *Reader's Digests*. However it was published by *Parent's Magazine* and contained along with the short stories, puzzles, games were "good comics". These comics were reprinted from previously published comic books and were often educational or humor/funny animal type stories. Years later I came across an annual series of comic book evaluation or ratings listings/guides printed in *Parents Magazine* from 1950-1956. The comic books were evaluated along the lines of No objection (A), some objection (B), objectionable (C) and very objectionable (D). For example there were 555 comic books rated in February 1950 with 165 (No objection), 154 (some objection), 167 (objectionable) and 69 (very objectionable). *Superman* and *Captain Marvel Adventures* got As while *Batman* and *All-Star Comics* pulled Ds! The publishers of *Parents Magazine* apparently thought with the Comics Code Authority then in effect (post-1956) that further annual ratings were unnecessary.

The Fifth Page

A Supplement to the Ensign Report #8 (***T-Frags #228***)

Since I started contributing a column to *T-Frags* it has been four pages in length. Occasional I will include a "Fifth Page" where I'll address issues of importance that have discussed in previous issues. These comments are not intended o be the "last word" on any topic but it will at least advance the conversation. Sam Gafford bought forward several issues concerning small press publishing and printing I'd like to comment on.

1. **Printing:** I've been using an online printer for ***Valiant Efforts*** (for all four issues) named Comix Wellsping. I have been overall satisfied with their performance. The printing prices are on their website. Sam mentions that he had a 56 page digest-size pub (50 copies) that his local printer for for a print estimate of $180. Let's say Sam resized his pub into a larger sized 52 page 8 1/2" x 11" format which would be $2.17 a copy not the almost $4 from the local printer. This is B & W interior with color covers which includes the Comix Wellspring house ad. Yes, there is a shipping charge, but still you'd get more for your money. If you wanted to get, say, 30 copies that would be around $60-70.

2. **Format:** I find it interesting that so many of you use the digest-sized format. (Disclaimer: I have published several digest-sized small press pubs over the years). With printing costs like those described in item 1 above—does doing digest-sized comics make sense anymore? I assume that it was a matter of economics say 20-30 years ago to do the comics or fanzines that size. Perhaps there needs to be some rethinking in the regard to size.

3. **Sales**: One persistence complaint I've heard is that small press pubs don't sell like they used to. Larry Johnson has voiced this on some of Dan Burke's podcasts (with Dan agreeing he has the same problem with his Amazon/CreateSpace pubs-- an exception being his Matt Baker books). Johnson mentioned he used to place ads in small press trade pubs and get 10-20 orders or more which is not the case now. I can certainly agree with that--I have very few orders for ***Valiant Efforts***.

4. **Multi-Format:** It seems as if a multi-format approach is the future of small press. Yes for people who like paper pubs (I've ran into same 20s something comic shop denizens who prefer paper) continue doing them. They work at conventions. However doing digital formats seem here to stay with pdfs (or other file formats) from Create Space or similar publishing sites can only grew in the future. By the time you read this I will have just turned 65 and I recently purchased an I-Pad. One of the reasons is, as I realize my mortality, I'm becoming more carefully about stockpiling more paper. Having digital copies takes up a whole lot less room (and easier to organize) than paper pubs. I have a hard time tossing out magazines and books (goodness, I might need it sometime in the future!) Yes I still love paper comics, books and magazines but I'm running out of bookshelf and closet space.

5. **Mortality**: I believe, mortality kicks in at this point (as mentioned above). I've spoken on the phone to that small press comix cyclone, Larry Blake and both he and I agree that we want to produce as much as we can while we are still able (Dan Burke has echoed this on his podcast). Life being short it seems to be more about legacy no matter how many copies of a pub we sell --what we do now will influence the future--hopefully for the good and the better. While I'd not heard of William Hope Hodgson before Sam's website. Hodgson's work is worth remembering and Sam's efforts in that regard are noble and may find support with future generations. All of us seem to be facing the same problem--a creative compulsion to produce comics or publications that contain our unique voice and finding an appreciative and receptive audience. Also it seems as if the audience for small press may have diminished--people just don't buy them as they used too (which was never in great numbers). This perhaps is a sign of the times--a generational issue.

6. New Generation comics: I try to stay somewhat up to date with current comics (there are some new excellent comics). If I want to read them I borrow them through the local public library--its amazing the variety they have so I don't have to buy them. Its not that I'm being cheap its just that I'm not sure if I'd want to spend money on it--very likely not. If I do like the comic I can purchase it later for my collection.

WHENEVER PEOPLE AGREE WITH ME I ALWAYS FEEL I MUST BE WRONG
(Oscar Wilde)
a column by J. Kevin Carrier

WHERE THE HECK IS FANTASY THEATER #23?

As I mentioned last column, I'm using Ka-Blam.com's print-on-demand service for this issue. The initial sample copy I got had some problems (my fault -- I set the type on the text pages too small). I fixed that, but then I started to have second thoughts about the expense (the printing cost is reasonable, but the shipping charges are murder). But finally, I decided to go forward...long story short, the book is being printed, copies will hopefully be in my hands by the beginning of June, and in your mailboxes shortly thereafter. Thanks for your patience.

HERO CENTRAL UNIVERSE #8-9
Jason Bullock

Ok, Jason, what the hell? That Uberfraulein sequence seemed familiar, and I finally made the connection: *Uncanny X-Men* #182, 1984. You copied the layout exactly, panel-by-panel, for eleven pages straight. That goes way beyond "homage". The worst part is, it makes me wonder how much of your other work has been swiped, and I just didn't recognize the source. Come on, man, you're a good artist, you don't have to resort to this kind of B.S. to prop yourself up.

WHO ARE THESE GHOSTS I AM SEEING?
THAT'S MISSY PIKE.
THE BEACH! AH FEEL!
AH WANT TO RUN -- BUT WHERE DO AH GO TO ESCAPE MYSELF?!
SO MANY THOUGHTS -- CAN'T SORT 'EM OUT, DON'T KNOW WHICH ARE MINE, DON'T EVEN KNOW ANYMORE WHO AH REALLY AM!
OH!
NO!
THOSE BOYS -- STEVE AN' JOE, JR. CAROL'S BROTHERS
STEVE WAS KILLED IN VIETNAM.
THE GIRL -- CAROL HERSELF! SHE'S RUNNING TOWARDS ME?

VALIANT EFFORTS #4
Don Ensign

That's a striking cover, well-rendered. Unfortunately, since I am secretly 12 years old, when I see the Protector's "power rod" held in front of his crotch at a 45 degree angle, I start giggling. Sorry.

I'm getting a big kick out of "Street Fury". I read Mike Tuz's criticism in the letter column, and he's right that the characters are mostly pretty reprehensible. But to

me, that's what makes it funny. You've got these various people with their self-serving agendas, constantly squabbling, and yet almost by accident they end up doing the right thing. I don't know if I'd want to read 100 issues of these guys, but for a short sequence I enjoyed the concept.

The two Golden Protector sequences were fine, if a little slight. I understand that they were parts of larger "jam" strips, but taken out of that context, there's not a lot to them. The Scout seems like an interesting character, a different take on the upstanding patriotic type.

ONWARD AND UPWARD

I think that catches me up with all the books...let me know if I missed anything, and I'll cover it in the next column. Hope everyone is getting some nice Spring weather. Keep making comics!

JKC

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TALES OF THE UFO

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HERO CENTRAL UNIVERSE #8-9: This double issue starts out with an intriguing cover! It looks like, at first glance, blood smeared across the image, and then I'm wondering about the pencil and the Pink Pearl eraser. It's as if this piece works as both as a representation of something and then displays the tools required to create it. Wait! I see the bite marks on her neck, bleeding, and the soul-less eyes!

I felt more engaged with the second story, "Chained Destiny!" than I did the first story, "Threads Asunder!" It may have been the straightforward situations being limned here. I like the Renfield character a lot; it may have been the reference the Bram Stoker creation that is appealing here. There's some nice transitions of the action in this chapter, and the drama is set up well. I think the art in both chapters is ambitious and pretty straightforward. I had little difficulty following the action.

Jason is ambitious here with this epic tale, and has been weaving together different characters, situations and events into a whole. It's a long novelistic treatment of mythology and modern life mixed together. Good versus evil. I like the crime family scenes in "Threads Asunder!" especially.

Jason's art has a good balance of lights and darks and has a nicely drawn style. I would like to see him vary the line widths more. There's a reliance on a heavy line outlining each figure and object.

And I want to mention the word balloons. This is not something exclusive to Jason's comics at all. I see this a lot these days in many people's comics that rely on the computer for not only the typeset lettering, but the word balloons themselves. They are all the same oval shape, and the stems are all the same. There were some rules in the hand lettered, hand drawn word balloon days that seem to be ignored with this process. One is that there should be a consistent one letter space between the body copy and the margin of the balloon. Sometimes in these computer balloons the copy is tight, right up the line and other times there's a lot of space. Every bit of word balloon dialogue is centered as well. Now, I know in the history of comics we had Gold Key in the 1960s that used square balloons, and Classics Illustrated had a mechanical looking type of balloon too. But for the most part, balloons were hand drawn, and the stems curved pointing in the direction of the speaker. What's wrong with doing hand-drawn balloons these days? I do it. And I also do Comics Sans typeset lettering in them. I feel that the balloons should integrate with the art, and Jason, don't think I'm picking on you personally. This goes for everyone who is in this practice these days.

Maybe I'm just judging from my own experience. I've drawn thousands of word balloons over the years and I don't mind doing them at all. I consider them part of the art.

VALIANT EFFORTS #4: This issue's cover by the artist Montos is certainly impressive, a nice composition with a good color scheme. The Golden Protector certainly looks "Golden" and I guess that's the moon in the night sky behind him. I must add this is the most virile portrayal of this character that I've ever seen.

Street Fury is the lead story, and this trio continues with their over-the-top street justice approach to battling crime. I think Lioness is the most vicious of the group. Her tactics even appall the others, especially the part where she flings the criminals into the car. Then she is portrayed as a caring mother. Hmmm? Tiger Mom? Lion Mom? Ralph Ellis Miley has been exploring this kind of super hero that seems to be prevalent these days. I would like to see him explore the greater consequences of their actions. They have a mission to rid the streets of this vermin but at what cost? Will their actions come back to haunt them? Could it be possible for one of their victims to lodge a lawsuit against them for damages? And then what kind of example are they setting for young people? Heroic or vengeful? How does the police force feel about their efforts? Are they allies or an interfering force? The art is more than competent, this time the pencils are abetted by Steve Shipley's very nice inks.

The second story, "A O Challenge" was admittedly "Chapter 1" and is basically one scene and really not much story. The young lady is threatened by a dark force, either Satan or one of his agents. It seems to be a symbolic portrayal of evil that needs to be thwarted and that's where the Protector comes in. The page design is nice, very competent layouts.

The third story, "Tumult In Tucson!" reminded me a bit of some recent reality here in Boston; the Marathon Day Bombing and its aftermath. This is very topical material. Here we have very clear-cut villains and heroes. The costumed sort, the powers that these people have that make things right. The Protector does what he does best – he protects others by flinging himself on the suicide bomber. This is easy to follow action in this story, laid out well. When reading this I was thinking of all the real-life heroes who stepped up to help all the bombing victims on April 15 in Boston.

This is a professionally printed book, and perfectly presented. I still want to make a case for hand-drawn word balloons. Here we have the same generic computer-generated balloons that I pointed out in the first review. I suppose it's easy to lay them in with a program, and it may be my generation that sees the balloons more as integrated with the art, aiding the story's flow. Perhaps I'm alone in this opinion.

CHUNGA #20: The age of the old fashioned fanzine is not dead! This 8 ½ x 11 side-stapled publication is proof of that! Rob Imes sent me an extra copy he had lying around and it was a great read. I suppose this comes from the science fiction fandom side of publishing, but I detect no snobbery in it at all. All the contributors are erudite writers with solid opinions backed up by facts. There's a lively report about an American attendee (Jacq Monohan) to a science fiction convention in Shefield, England and her attention to detail makes this a very entertaining piece. Then there's a very descriptive article about Hokum in its many forms by Michael Dobson, a speculative piece on the nature of science fiction music in films and TV, and various reviews.

But the real meat of this book is the letters column, which takes up over a third of its pages (46 pages total). This is the essence of fannish discussion on all kinds of topics ranging from the issue of hoarding versus collecting, e-readers versus print medium, the issue of layout in 'zine regarding placement of illustrations, and the nature of self publishing itself. There's one camp that says its just for fun and quality is not an issue and another view that feels that these publications are "art" in themselves. Then there's the evolution of used bookstores. The correspondents are pretty equally located between the United States and Britain and even some from Australia. This whole issue was a great read and the reader involvement reminded me a lot of Fred Wordworth's "The Mystery and Adventures Series Review." There's a general opinion that print 'zines garner a lot more written response than e-zines. And no where did I detect any sense of "snobbery" meaning that science fiction fans are superior to comics fans. The editors say they send this book on a "whim" but will reluctantly take $5.00 in payment. Chunga, 1013 North 36th Street, Seattle, WA 98103.

ODDS AND ENDS: I must offer my apologies for getting Fred Woodworth's name wrong last issue. "Woodword" indeed!! I just knew when Rob Imes mentioned a typo on the UFO Facebook page that I was the culprit. Let me expound a little on this error. To begin with this was not a typo. A typo is technically a mistake in typing, transposed letters, or a misspelling. This was a conceptual error. I was a production man at a Boston weekly arts newspaper for several years, and back in the days before spell check and grammar check we employed people for the specific job of "proofreader." These people read copy that had been typeset against the original writing. They weren't the writers, nor were they the editors. Thus they had a fresh eye for any errors. And any professional publication strived to send out a product that was as error free as possible. I'll bet practically every member reading this knows as a self-publisher you are a "one man operation." That means you have to have an objective eye. I go through each so-called "finished" issue of Tales of Fantasy (comics and text) at least three times before going to press, with some time in between just to catch all the typing errors. Still some sneak by. And I try to do the same thing with

this column. I could say that last time I was in a rush because I wanted to get it out by deadline and maybe I was a little pre-occupied because I had surgery coming up the next week (but I figure that would be an excuse).

Nonetheless, there's a difference between a professional approach and a slack approach. This was part of the discussion in the pages of Chunga. About 20 years ago one of our UFO members put out a book, and on the bottom of the inside cover (where you would normally find a box with the publishing info: "What Not Comics #3, published by Joe Publisher, 303 Mockingbird Lane, etc.) there was a hand written scrawl: "Sorry, folks! Forgot to type!"

Oh, he was at the copy shop that day with his flats and noticed his error at the last minute. Instead of going home to correct it, he went ahead in this sloppy fashion. There's no excuse for this. This is the difference between trying your best and just sliding by. As one writer in Chunga said, "It's an insult to the reader."

So I'm trying to be as professional as possible and I'm old enough to know from experience that I don't always achieve perfection.

Tales of Fantasy #61 is being finished up as I type this. I seem to be fighting with the letters column. Somehow two thirds of it just disappeared from my computer! Off to the ether, and my efforts on a search mission have failed, so that meant a lot of re-typing and re-formatting, and in addition it has been doing some weird things with the layout when I insert pictures as well! Oh, sometimes I just long for the paste up days when you could correct all this with much less labor. But here we are! This issue may be in your hands by the time this newsletter comes out. And in addition I'm working with Dan Burke on a few projects. One of them is getting recent issues of TOF available as PDFs. These will be for those readers who prefer this format.

And the big news is that I have all my material ready for The Best of Tales of Fantasy Volume One. This will be a 200-page Print-on-Demand book on Amazon.com. It should be available soon at a reasonable price. This has been a lot of work but I think the results are worth it! Dan is assisting me with this as well.

And in addition, he's "inking" a story I penciled. He's doing it on a computer tablet device and the results are quite interesting. And you can learn some more about this project by listening to a recent Art Studio Podcast I did with him. You can find the link on Facebook; it's dated May 4.

I'd proposed on our UFO Members Only Page on Facebook a while back that perhaps the Newsletter could be available as a PDF. Rob went through some efforts to contact someone to host it, and he declined, and the reasons where respectful. I wonder about the technical matters of creating such a product. I know that these columns come in different formats and because Rob's and my computer speak different languages I just print mine out and mail it to him. Perhaps just scanning in each printed page as a picture and then creating the PDF from those would work. But it's the matter of hosting, which I'm not too familiar with. I know Ditkomania was available in this format recently. Where was this hosted?

Now this may sound like shocking words from someone like me whom some people have considered a Luddite, but I understand the appeal of the electronic medium (although I don't partake of it) that so many readers prefer these days. It would be a way to reach more fans, readers, and publishers. I would say, in a hypothetical fashion that only paid members contribute to this paper publication, and the plus would be that the reviews and discussion would reach a wider audience, which in theory everyone strives for. I'm suggesting all of this and I'm not fully schooled in the technical end of it yet, and don't know all the work involved. But I feel we should have this option on the table. It's just a matter of working out the details to make it happen.

So here we are in the UFO 40+ years down the road and still chugging along! Back lane or superhighway we are still going. Glad to be part of it. Keep on publishing and keep on reviewing! Best wishes to everyone!

Summer Splashing Fast Onto Small Press Scene!

by Jason Bullock

Spring days have found themselves sliding ever so quickly into the rush of Summer press. During these last few months I have ridden the roller coaster of personal insanity when it comes to work, creativity, and self-publishing. I have lost a personal hero with the death of **Ray Harryhausen**. My own works have resounded back onto the scene despite a year ending with personal injury. My own studio efforts are finally moving into new venues at the end of this year.

We here at the United Fanzine Organization had the opportunity this spring to enjoy a couple new releases from the gang in the group. From Rob Imes we received Issue Number 90 of ***Ditkomania***. We are privy to a special letter from Ron Frantz about his time as publisher of ACE Comics in 1986-87. This issue was an experiment in utilizing Kickstarter for funding . Rob has proven that we should always be open to new experiences in our craft. This issue was a phenomenal insight into the past of other's lives that Ditko affected.

Also available this spring was ***Valiant Efforts*** Number 4 from Don Ensign. This issue featured Golden Protector and Street Fury. Ralph Ellis Miley's and Steve Shipley clean pencils and inks for the Street Fury addition of this release. Also tributing in this issue is the special dotage to Scott Clark from 1969-2013. This was a great omage issue.

My own studio released ***HeroCentral Universe*** Issue 8-9. This new format is a double sized 40 page allowed more story in the saga to be presented especially with the many characters that have been presented to the audience over the last year. This issue did have a controversial mature element that a few people have found questions in this issue. With the consumption of the Tortelli Family Mafioso assets, a young puppy was killed as Aesys was setting her warning to Tony Tortelli before his own demise. Rest assured despite the graphic nature of this depiction is not a personal hobby of my own. The depiction was designed to show that when given to its own devices, even the powerful can fall into destruction of self. Others really enjoyed this issue as they got to see more of the battle scene hunting for Flora Ironwood by her cybernetic boyfriend Michael Faraday, Esq. Come June you will get to see the second culmination of the web comic **Hero Central, Jr.** This full color release is the second year of our heroes in training under Raiden's guidance. With colors by Steven Lisefski and Germaine Webb, the HCJr webcomic is outstanding for everyone!

This summer I have been asked to mentor a young journalist in training who has decided that she wants to produce a summer newsletter over the next several months. Her goal is to present reviews, events, art, and her overall summer experiences for her classmates. The newsletter is called **Pop Goes The Weasel Newsletter** and will be available in digital and hardcopy versions. McKenzie Rogers, the young journalist in training, is truly motivated to have her own works published. I wanted to take this opportunity to address several things when considering mentoring. There are seven key things to pay attention to when mentoring. You want to help them develop

professionally, otherwise their talents would not have caught your attention.

1) Invite that person to sit in with you while do you do things, explaining why you did certain things.

2) Talk to them about dilemmas that you are facing in your own job.

3) Give them greater responsibilities often helping them work through events to be successful.

4) Give them someone else to manage during their assignments. Helping them work through management issues is the key.

5) Talk to them directly about their own goals and how they can achieve them.

6) Enhance their own confidence levels by encouraging them during their work.

7) Promote them or help them find the next step in their own path to excel.

These have always been in my repertoire when working with others, encouraging others to help them grow when mentoring others under their own wings. You never know who you will affect in your life with your work.

One such man who affected my own desire for creation was the father of Dynamation, **Ray Harryhausen**. His passing this past May 7th at age 92 was a huge loss. His work inspired myself and many thousands of others with his work on *Mighty Joe Young* (1949), *7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), *Jason and the Argonauts* (1958), and his last work *Clash of the Titans* (1981). We will miss you greatly Master of Motion !

With Great Thought,

Jason Bullock
Hero Central Studio

BOOK REVIEW BY ROB IMES

IDIOSYNCRASIES

Earlier this year, I searched Kickstarter's website for prose magazines that were being done and saw one for a high school literary magazine. When I was in high school, the "lit mag" was a publication that provided an outlet for the creative efforts (fiction, poetry, artwork, etc.) of the students each year, but not every school has a lit mag. (I don't know if my old high school still does one, in fact.) In my senior year, I won 2nd prize in both the short story and artwork categories, and have fond memories of being a part of that (quite unlike most of my high school memories, which weren't happy). So, I pledged $5 for this lit mag on Kickstarter, and the thick, digest-size magazine arrived in my mailbox this week. The cover, drawn by one of the students, is shown below. It's a very busy cover, not to my taste, but fits the tone of unfiltered, student-led expression. The majority of the issue consists of poetry, with some short prose at the back of the issue. I was impressed by the writing in some of the poems, although others felt like they were part of a writing assignment (several of these began "I am..." and listed various labels to describe the author, which wasn't too interesting). Hopefully more schools will provide this type of creative outlet.

NOZ NOTES by Rob Imes

ANOTHER KICKSTARTER

On May 21st (two days before I printed up this issue of *T-Frags*), I set up a Kickstarter page for the upcoming issue (#91) of my fanzine *Ditkomania*. I was expecting it to take several days for the project to get approved, since my previous attempt (with DM #90) took a week to get approved, with a couple replies back from Kickstarter trying to get me to "improve" the listing. I had suspected that it would be easier the second time around, since I was following the same format that had gotten me approved to do #90, and it turns out that I was right: Kickstarter approved the page for #91 the next day. So, I did a couple minor tweaks and hit the "launch" button to make it go live on their website. Just search the word "Ditko" on Kickstarter.com to find my fundraising project for DM #91. All members of the UFO will be getting a print copy of the issue, but I've offered various rewards for higher amounts that can be pledged, including this time an original drawing by me.

Here's how Kickstarter works. You set up an account at www.kickstarter.com first of all. They have rules there about what can be listed there, but basically it's to fund a creative project: a book, a record album, etc. You set the goal of how much money you want to raise ($400 in my case) and the time limit in which to raise it (I picked 20 days because I want to print the thing up in a few weeks). You are trying to get people to come to your page and pledge money so that you meet your goal. (If you meet your goal in the time limit, then their credit cards are charged for the amounts that they pledge. If the goal isn't met, their credit cards are not charged and nothing happens.)

The way you entice people to pledge is to offer "rewards." Some rewards can get elaborate, but I kept mine simple: Pledge $2 or more and you get a PDF of DM #91. Pledge $4 or more and you get a print copy of #91 (USA residents only). Pledge $6 or more and you get a print copy of #91 (anywhere in the world) AND the PDF copy, too. (You can put quantity limits on the rewards, too, in case you aren't able to meet demand for whatever it is that you are offering.) Kickstarter encourages you to have a video clip promoting your project that you upload to the page. I don't have a video camera, but my digital camera does have a video feature, so I used that to make the video, even though it looks a bit crappy.

Before the project goes live on Kickstarter, they have to approve it, which can take a few days. Also, instead of using Paypal, they have Amazon Payments as their method of money transfer. So, the money that is pledged (again, if the stated dollar amount goal is met within the time limit) is sent to Amazon Payments, and then you can withdraw it from there to your bank account. So, when you sign up with Kickstarter, you go through the process of signing up with Amazon Payments as well (which took me around 10 minutes but can take longer).

I think that's all there is to it really. You can try it and set up a project for your own publication just as a test and go through the various parts of creating your project page. The project is not sent for approval to them to actually go on the site until you get to the last page of the thing where you press the "Submit" button to them to get their approval. So, check it out, no harm done if you go through the process and decide not to Submit it at the end.

My previous Kickstarter project, for DM #90, received pledges totalling $501, of which around $450 was received by me after Amazon and Kickstarter fees were taken. (You do want to ask for a bit more than you need, to take into account those fees.) They say that there can be a delay of several days between the ending of the Kickstarter project and when the money will be in your Amazon Payments account, which you then transfer to your bank account, but I found that the delay to receive the money was in hours, not days. It remains to be seen if I'll be as successful the second time around. One key is to promote the project, so that people know about it. The Ditkomania Facebook group currently has over 350 members -- far more than it had back when I did the Kickstarter

for DM #90. If half of those 350 members pledged $2 each (to receive the PDF of DM #91), then that would bring in $350, nearly reaching my goal of $400. The higher the rewards that are offered (in addition to the lower ones) make it easier to reach that goal. Also, sometimes people who simply search the Kickstarter site for interesting projects may stumble upon your page and decide to pledge. My DM project is located in the "Comics" category of their site, so that fans of comics can find it by looking at that category on the website.

UFO REVIEWS:

HERO CENTRAL UNIVERSE #8-9
(Published by Jason Bullock)

Unlike David Branstetter and J. Kevin Carrier (see their columns), I didn't notice any page layouts swiped from other comics. The double-size format was a good idea, but perhaps it would have been better to have regular numbering instead of split-issue numbering. As usual with HCU, there was a lot happening, with a lot of characters in the scenes. Individually I think each scene worked well, but taken as a whole, the canvas just seems too big or "epic" to get a handle on. My favorite part this issue was the ending with **Uberfraulein**. She has a great name and look (design-wise), and it would be more fun for me if this whole series focused on just her in short self-contained tales rather than continuing chapters featuring a rotating cast of a dozen other characters.

VALIANT EFFORTS Vol. 3, #4
(Published by Don Ensign)

This was an enjoyable if low-key issue. Although some readers found the StreetFury heroes unlikable (such as Mike Tuz's strong objection in the lettercol of this comic), I had a more sympathetic reaction to their personalities, finding them to be like a modern day version of the bickering of the Fantastic Four, albeit more extreme. The "rush" that the heroes got from being in battle reminded me of a sentiment expressed by the heroine in the similarly-violent 1990s Peter David & George Pérez series *Sachs and Violens*. The fact that so much of the material is from that era, or older, makes me long to see some newer work shown. (Even though this work is "new" to me because I haven't seen it before, the knowledge that it's old stuff causes me to be curious about what new material in this series would be like.) All in all, though, an enjoyable comic, with admirably professional production values.

TALES OF FANTASY #60
(Published by Larry Johnson)

I've already submitted a letter of comment to Larry which will be appearing in TOF #61 (due out later this month), but I do want to add that I think TOF is a remarkable achievement in small-press publishing. One interesting aspect of it is that despite its obvious small-press style and unique approach, the comic appeals in a commercial sense as well, I think. To explain what I mean, think of Marvel's 1970s *Master of Kung Fu* character Shang Chi, who was always shown wearing the same distinctive red and yellow fighting outfit. This was done to make him not only an easily identifiable character in the story, but for marketing and branding purposes. If Mego was going to make a Shang Chi action figure, he'd have those same clothes on. So, it didn't matter if the more sophisticated readers thought he ought to change his outfit once in a while (for variety's sake or for realism) because that would have diluted the *brand* of the character. A current example would be Matt Smith's bowtie-wearing *Doctor Who*. It's a way of "selling" a character like selling a product to a customer.

Small-press creators usually have no interest in such branding, I think, but Larry Johnson does. For example, whenever Madame Boogala appears in the pages of TOF, her appearance always conforms to Larry's design, even when drawn by other artists. Boogala always has three little curls poking out from under her headwrap, curling in the same direction each time. To use an example in the current issue (#60), Jesse Stuart always wears the distinctive green spacesuit and has his hairstyle the same as it was back in the 1970s. In a recent letter, I suggested to Larry that Jesse's hairstyle was outdated, that perhaps he could follow the example of Dave Cockrum when updating the look of the *Legion* in the 1970s when the team's 1960s had begun to look too quaint and old-fashioned.

But I think Larry intends for the status quo to remain, so that one's familiarity with a character works in its favor -- not with boredom, but with a growing awareness of the character as a kind of icon in the way that he has been portrayed so consistently over such a long period of time. Notice that at the end of the current story, "A Day at the Zoo," despite the way in which Dacto's friendship with Jesse was threatened during

the course of the story, by the end the status quo has been restored, and the two can continue on with their adventures as if this story has never occured. It's possible that Larry will follow-up on the questions that this story raises, but that would risk losing the "new reader" in a backstory and building up a continuity for Jesse that might become less accessible (unlike the status quo).

Anyway, just some additional thoughts I had about another fine issue of TOF.

And now for a non-UFO review... I had written the following review of a recent science fiction novel on my Facebook page a few months ago but thought it was worth preserving in more permanent form here.

BOOK REVIEW

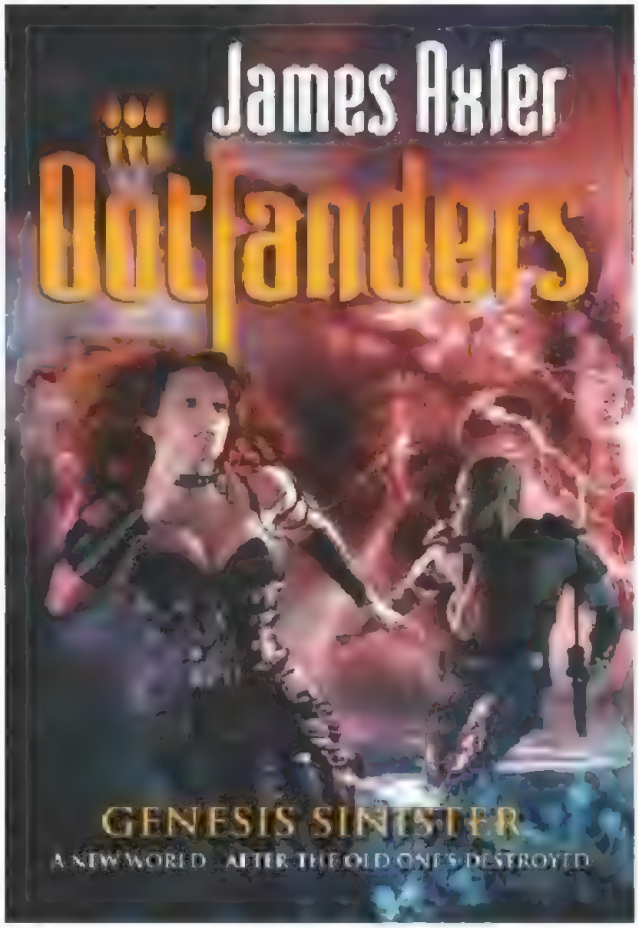
OUTLANDERS #63, titled **"Genesis Sinister,"** is a 315-page novel, but it's a pretty brisk read; it just took me a month to read it because I was lacking time more than motivation. However, I found that even though this was the first *Outlanders* novel I ever read, I was able to pick right up where I'd left off each chapter, with the characters and events still vivid in my mind.

The Outlanders is a science fiction series taking place in a post-apocalyptic Earth, a spin-off of the *Death Lands* series. Both are published by Gold Eagle, longtime home (since the 1980s) of the *Mack Bolan / Executioner* books. I had my eye on trying one of these *Outlanders* books last year, and bought #63 in early January (the book had come out in October). I'd been wanting to get this one read before getting the new one (#64, *Savage Dawn*) that came out in February (which I've since bought but not yet read). The 65th book, *Savage Space*, releases in May.

The front cover (depicting two of the series' heroes, Grant and the redhead Brigid Baptiste) and the story's title make no sense until you get to the last half-dozen chapters of the book, where a storm with gears in its clouds indeed appears. The title "Genesis Sinister" refers to the book's climax where our heroes have to prevent the world from being remade by alien beings in their own image. Until those last half-dozen chapters, however, the novel had a more leisurely pace, which made me wonder if the various loose ends would be tied up before the end (which they are, for the most part).

There are some disturbingly violent scenes in the book, that if they were illustrated in comic book form they would be deemed "mature readers" material (and likely banned from some library shelves). But because it takes effort to read prose writing, and the objectionable acts have to be *thought* rather than plainly seen, the book flies under the radar of any would-be censors. While some of it could be considered gratuitous (the poor girl chained up like a dog, for instance), I found that most of it served a purpose in the story to demonstrate character traits. The novel's opening chapter is the most violent in the book, depicting a gang of pirates taking over a helpless ship, which may make the reader look at safer entertainment like *Pirates of the Caribbean* a bit differently (although there is a moment of humor here even amidst the carnage, as the pirates turn against their captain for committing an act that they say is "sick," after they have just committed acts that fit the same bill).

The series' writer, "James Axler," is a house name; the novel was actually written by Rik Hoskin (thanked in the fine print inside), and I enjoyed reading it from start to finish. I liked the characters and it made me want to read more, to follow them on their further adventures, or at least to the next book in the series.



LETTERS

Hi Rob,

Thanks for sending me **TF #227**. It gives me a small glimpse into what is going on in small-press comics -- since the news & reviews 'zines all seem to be extinct.

As the *Comics Buyer's Guide* has been cancelled, I no longer have ANY way whatsoever to keep up to date on pro-comics *or* small-press.

Very few old small-press friends even bother to write or call anymore. At times I feel like I've become the invisible man, *or* that small-press AND pro comics have all vanished!

It is very pleasant to find a way to keep track of even a *few* titles. I wrote to a few of your members after reading the issue of TF. Sure hope I get some responses.

FIVE STAR COMICS #3 will be out *very* soon. Fellow creator Terence Hanley and I will have them at this year's S.P.A.C.E., and at several local conventions in this area.

LARRY BLAKE
69306 St. Rt. 124
Reedsville, OH 45772

(The assumption seems to be that everyone is online and can get their news that way instead. A website, however, is no substitute for a physical magazine which can be bought by anyone regardless of whether the person has access to the internet or not. More info about Five Star Comics *can be found at* www.fivestarcomics.blogspot.com *or by contacting Larry. Good to hear from you, Larry! -- Rob Imes)*

Hi Rob,

Thanks for sending the latest issue of TF -- I sat myself down and started reading it before bedtime, and when I looked up again, it was really late. Your mags always have such good material. All the contributors make enjoyable reads, every article or letter chock full o'good stuff. I'm impressed with how well it all fits together and has an engaging personality. Love the little surprises, like hidden candy in a drawer -- the photo of the *Dell Collector* featuring (one of my favorites) Magnus Robot Fighter in an iconic situation, his open-handed karate chop demolishing the chrome headed robot -- all that's missing is the "Screeeee!" whine blasting out in the wonderful sound effects lettering. Also was fascinated by the *Ensign Report* about the Rob Hanes books -- I'd never seen the books before, so I'm going to go online to research them. The Hanes art looks great. I agree with Ensign's friend's comment that Hanes seemed like a grown up "Jonny Quest." Yeah, that's good. After reading the article, I felt that the globe-trotting adventurer Hanes was kind of a combination of Tintin and James Bond. Simiar look, similar cast of supporting characters, all that's missing is his white dog Snowy.

At the recent library used book sale I picked up a hardcover book for fifty cents called *A Celebration of Comic Art and Memorabilia* by Robert Lesser, 1975. It has about 300 pages and is filled with photos of early comics, marketed comic characters, lists, references, dates, etc. For example, there's a double page spread of various makes of Buck Rogers ray gun toys and water pistols. If you'd like it to add to your reference bookshelf, I'd be happy to pass it on to you when I'm finished with it. Let me know. (I know you've got a million comics and books already stuffing your shelves, so I know it's tough to make room for one more.) Again, congrats on getting another great issue out!

JACK IMES

(Thanks, Jack! For those who don't know, Jack is my older brother, who helped spur my interest in comics in the first place when I was a child. -- R. I.)

Dear Rob,

How shall man communicate? Man, that is the question.

I have often suspected that if and when a monster from outer space is contacted...man will not be able to communicate with him.

Why?

Look around you. Notice the mis-communication. Or, as Zeppelin once screamed, Communication Breakdown.

Here is a simple problem: Can you name the day set aside for prayer and thought?

A Christian will probably answer Sunday.

A Jew will say it is Saturday.

And a Muslim will give Friday as his response.

Or, here is one even more simple.

What is the Sabbath Day?

A Jew and a Christian could arm-wrestle over that question.

If man cannot even agree on such simple questions, how can he ever hope to communicate with a Martian?

This doesn't even touch on purposeful miscommunication.

One joker on CNN this afternoon, before any evidence can be uncovered, has identified the Boston bomber as a right-wing nut-job.

And you will be familiar with flaming in email and on blogs.

Do you suppose those fellows are really interested in authentic communication?

The deck is stacked against letter-writing.

It is slow, requires thought, necessitates the use of tools and implements and postage.

The USPS is losing money hand over fist and raising the price to mail a letter.

More and more folks are turning to email.

Yet.

The world is a big place. Not everyone has abandoned the art of writing letters.

(I still correspond with about twenty individuals.)

I still read and enjoy the fanzines, old and new.

There is always something of interest in any of them.

It was a pleasant surprise to find a dear friend mentioned in the April number of *T-Frags*.

Andre LeBlanc was one of the most beautiful men I have ever known.

Look for his Bible Cards and see how he has communicated his ideas and interpretations. of the key moments in The Bible. Solomon is there, Mary and Adam and many others in brief paragraphs and memorable artwork.

Out,

ROBIN SNYDER *(robinbrigit@comcast.net)*
3745 Canterbury Lane #81
Bellingham, WA 98225-1186

(Robin is back in the swing of things, regularly publishing his newsletter The Comics! as well as new comic books and essays by Steve Ditko. His Kickstarter project funding the Ditko Public Service Package was very successful, too. You can find out more by contacting him at the above address. Thank you, Robin, for your support and friendship. -- R. I.)

Rob,

I find your rather lengthy e-mail reprinted in *T-Frags* #226 "Right Wishes and Creator Rights" quite stimulating.

You are very good at systematic laying out your case in good lawyer fashion. It seems to me the issue here is conflict between what is legal and what is ethical/moral.

You present several examples, such as science fiction writers Robert Silverberg, Ray Bradbury and Steve Ditko. Silverberg actually confesses he let copyrights to some of his early work slip into public domain but he protests because it is not his best work he'd rather not see it reprinted. He doesn't seem to have a legal leg to stand on, but is it ethical to go against the wishes of the original author? Also Bradbury made an agreement with a publisher only to once reprint some of his early stories. I suppose the copyrights were renewed at that time (1984) which would still be in effect.

Another issue has to do with comic book reprinting on the internet. You cite the example "Diversions of a Groovy Kind". I did check it out and yes there are 1970s Marvel stories (and other current publishers) reprinted in total. I am amazed they are still up as I'd think Marvel's internet lawyers would slap a cease and desist order on them to take down the offending material.

I am a frequent visitor to **Digital Comics Museum**. They have a list of approved public domain publishers and a list of forbidden publishers that can't be uploaded to the site (Marvel, DC, several others). I personally don't see the problem with what DCM is doing. They make available public domain material from defunct publishers where most of the stories were done by anonymous artists and writers 60-70 plus years ago. Most of the creators of this material are either dead or don't care or can't remember what they did. I believe other "publishers" have harvested digital copies of these comics (from DCM) and made them available in CD/DVD form or even in paper book form. The ethical consideration here might be that there is no payment (donation) as far as I'm aware from these secondary publishers. The volunteer scanners of this material have done all the work and yet their efforts are probably earning money for those "pirate" publishers. However that seems to be a necessary drawback for putting this public domain material on a public website. But since it is public domain in the first there is not real legal recourse.

The question I have is can you propose perhaps a sliding scale solution to this problem of reprinting public domain material? What constitutes actual "fair use" and for "scholarship" purposes? Where are we stepping over the line in reprinting with this material? Is it really a matter being a gentleman and coming into compliance with the wishes of the original author (as in the case of Silverberg) to not publish earlier work even if it is in public domain?

DON ENSIGN (*donensign@mail.com)*

Got the new *Tet Frags* today (thanks!), and was happily surprised to see that **David Branstetter** is now a member of your merry band. I met David last year at SPACE in Columbus, Ohio, where I bought two issues of *Strawman* and had a couple of very pleasant conversations with him. He's a great guy and a great talent who should be a terrific addition to the co-op.

MIKE TUZ *(michaeltuz@rocketmail.com)*
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(We're happy to have David as a UFO member as well! Readers, Mike Tuz has recently published a book using Createspace, a print-on-demand service, which can be purchased on Amazon as a printed book or for the Kindle. Just search the name Michael Tuz on Amazon to find The Passage in the Darkness and Other Stories. *Thanks, Mike! -- R. I.)*

(The following letter is by ***Taral Wayne****, editor of the science fiction fanzine* ***Broken Toys****, in response to some of the issues raised in a previous issue of* T-Frags *as well as our own email correspondence. Taral is a cartoonist whose frequently-published SF zine can be downloaded as a PDF at http://www.efanzines.com/Taral/index.htm I do urge all fanzine fans to check out the efanzines site regularly to discover many of the current zines which are being done these days, some of which are available in print as well as PDF. Thanks, Taral! -- R.I.)*

I would much prefer to publish on paper, though it might have the inadvertant effect of limited how widely I could distribute the zine. I certainly could't afford to spend as much as $1.75 or $2 a copy by mailing it to people I know who are outside of SF fandom. My lettercol has actually dragged people into fandom who never wrote a loc to a zine before ... which is something I'm very happy about. But, if I could afford to mail 100 paper copies and e-mail the rest, I would.

SF fans in the 30's, and through a good deal of the 40's, thought they were producing small magazines, and tried to imitate the prozines in having covers, lettercols, editorials and a subscription rate. Most of those institutions were adaptable and remained in most fanzines in the decades to follow -- though having a cover is very much optional ... as you saw in *Broken Toys*. Subscription rates, though, turned out to be more of a hassle than they were worth. Unless the Table of Contents had a half dozen pros in ever issue, the fanzine editor could never attract more than a handful of subbers -- it was never enough to pay many of the bills, but added paperwork. Up until the 1970s, though, it was still commonplace for fanzines to have a per-issue price, so that anyone (even non-fans) could write to you and request an issue. Even that gesture toward a commercial basis for fanzine publishing seems to have faded away since then ... at least in the circles I travel.

Comics fandom is a different world, in which buying and selling seems to have been an integral part from its beginning. Being able to buy reprints of old SF stories made it possible for anyone to be a collector, without having a lot of money. For most of comics fandom's history, to be a collector meant having enough money to buy original appearances ... except in rare circumstances. That began to change in the 1980s when a number of small publishers like Kitchen Sink began putting out *The Complete Popeye* or collections of *Little Nemo*. But that was mostly about newspaper strips. It was much later, the 1990s, before old comic books commonly got the same treatment. So, it seems to me that the fanzines reflected the same buy-and-sell attitude.

The bottom line is that SF fanzine has no tradition nor any institutions to assist fanzine publication. It would probably not be practical, either. If Joe gets money, why not Bob or Karen? Also, the fannish institutions that make money are conventions. Unfortunately, the divide between fanzine fandom and convention fandom has grown steadily over the decades, as fanzine fandom diminishes and con fandom continues to grow. Most con goers rarely see a fanzine and may not read any. They would see little reason why convention money should be diverted to zine publishing.

Without any tradition of putting up money to get fanzines, it would be impossible to make such a scheme work -- one Australian fan tried this and was roundly condemned. Of course, her problem wasn't just that she proposed an antiquated idea -- every new generation re-invents the wheel -- but because she clearly felt she was an exception to the rule, and such a superior editor that she should receive special treatment. That's the part that went over like a lead balloon...

There are sometimes exceptions -- I intend to see if I can have an exception made in my own case. I have a project to republish (as a CD-Rom) an important "document" from the 1940s -- it was a history of LA fandom that is the most vivid snapshot we have of people like Forrest J. Ackerman and Ray Bradbury when they were very young. The zine was only republished once, many decades ago ... and like *Batman* or *Superman* 1, everyone knows about it and wants to read it. Getting a copy isn't a matter of money, though -- there were probably never as many as 100 copies, 40 or 50 of which went through an apa in 1948. Nobody knows how many are left. But, it was my good fortune to buy a box of unwanted, unidentified fanzines in the 1970s, and among them was this document. I'm pretty sure I can get funding from one worldcon fund or another for this. Maybe later this year..

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If any readers would like to comment on this issue of T-Frags, *you may send a letter to the UFO Chairman, Rob Imes (contact info on the front inside cover). Thanks!*

The UFO Constitution

Article One: Becoming a Member

To become a member of the **United Fanzine Organization** co-op, one must inform the Chairman of one's **application** and send a copy of his/her comic or zine to all members listed on the UFO roster. The membership will then **vote** on acceptance. (If the applicant's zine or comic is available to view online, the applicant may email the members a link to the pages for evaluation in lieu of mailing a printed copy; however, applicants should send a printed copy to members who are not regularly online or who specifically request the applicant to mail them a printed copy.) If a majority of the membership votes "yes" on the applicant's admission, he/she becomes a member. Applicants who receive a majority of "no" votes may apply again for membership at a later date.

Article Two: Membership Requirements

(a) All members are required to **publish a minimum of 20 pages** of new material (comic or text) per year. Web zines with equivalent material will count toward membership requirements. There is no maximum limit to the number of titles one may publish as memberzines.

(b) Each member is required to **mail a free copy of each memberzine**, as it is published, to all other co-op members. Publishers of webcomics should send hard copy versions of their online comics to the membership (as not all members may have internet access). Digital publishers must send an email to each member notifying them of their webzine. (Since webzines are free to all, those publishing print zines are not required to mail their zines to those publishing only on the web, but are encouraged to do so.)

(c) Each member is required to **submit a column** to at least every other issue of the UFO Newsletter (*Tetragrammaton Fragments*). The purpose of member columns is first to review the memberzines that one has received and second discuss club business (such as voting on amendments and applicants). *T-Frag* contributions are limited to a maximum of 10 pages each issue per member, unless the member receives the Chairman's consent to allow a higher page count for that particular issue of the newsletter.

(d) **Member dues are $20.00 annually**. These dues help to cover co-op promotion, and printing and mailing of the bi-monthly UFO Newsletter. If a member falls behind in his/her annual dues and/or publishing requirements, the member may ask the Chairman for a brief extension. If the member is dropped for failing to meet publishing requirements or newsletter participation, any remaining money in their account will be used toward their subscription to the newsletter.

(e) The UFO is limited to **25 members**. Others applying after the limit is reached will be placed on a waiting list and considered for membership in the order in which they applied. Waitlisters have the option of submitting a column to the UFO newsletter but they are not required to do so. It is at the discretion of each UFO member whether to send their memberzines to those on the waitlist since it is not required. UFO members are allowed to be members of other co-ops while they are in the UFO.

(f) **Honorary Members** are persons who have been voted into that position by a majority vote of the members. They may contribute to the newsletter, but have no voting power, are not required to pay the annual dues, and are not required to meet publication requirements. It is at the discretion of each member whether to send an Honorary Member a copy of their memberzine or not, as it is not required.

Article Three: Memberzine Requirements

(a) Each UFO publication must carry the **UFO symbol** on one of its four covers (exterior or interior front and back), preferably the front exterior cover. Webzines must display the symbol on their front page prominently.

(b) Each UFO memberzine (print or digital) is required to carry the **UFO Checklist**. Members may alter the wording in the Checklist as it appears in their own publications, as long as the changes are accurate and non-detrimental to those listed. (For minis or zines of 16 pages or less, an Abbreviated Checklist may be used, with simply the titles and prices of the books, and the names and addresses of the respective publishers.)

(c) The UFO does not **censor** its material, however responsibility and use of good taste and common sense in publishing are encouraged. The Chairman must publish member columns in the UFO newsletter unedited as long as they are within the page-count limit and not illegal or obscene in content.

Article Four: The UFO Chairman

(a) **Annual election**: A Chairman shall be elected in September, by a majority vote of the members, to a one-year term commencing in November. (Those running for the position of Chairman should start their campaigns no later than the July issue of the newsletter.)

(b) **Responsibilities**: An elected Chairman has the duties of editing and publishing the bi-monthly UFO newsletter, conducting the general co-op business, managing member dues accounts, or delegating these affairs. In consideration of the time and effort expended in the production of the UFO newsletter, a newly elected Chairman will be allowed two years -- dating from the publication of this first NL -- to publish an issue of his/her regular small press book, instead of the one zine a year requirement for the other members.

(c) **Emergency Chairman**: It is important that the UFO Chairman appoint an Emergency Chairman immediately upon assuming office. The Emergency Chairman shall assume the office of UFO Chairman if the elected Chairman resigns the position prior to the next election, or if the elected Chairman fails to publish the newsletter for more than 100 consecutive days.

(d) **Removal**: There is no limit to the amount of terms a Chairman may hold. The Chairman may be removed from office only by a majority vote. A Chairman who decides not to run for another term should make this known to the members prior to the publication of the July newsletter, so that other members may have time to announce their campaigns for the position.

ZORK